

## OPINION

## Why do we put people in boxes?

BY JIM REILAND

Social psychologists who study bias—our tendency to put people in boxes based on scraps of information about them—believe it has been a human trait for a long time. Imagine yourself belonging to a tribe or clan living a thousand years ago. While out fishing you spot strangers—people not from your group—on the far shore. Do you risk approaching them to learn why they're there, what you may know in common, ways to help each other? Or exercise caution and avoid these strangers who look, dress, and speak differently? Bias evolved as an efficient way to quickly process complex information about potentially life-threatening situations—our survival probably depended on it.

Thanks to this ancient survival trait, we're wired to have bias. Some biases we learn as children; some come later. But today we can see how unchecked bias plays out in unhelpful ways as we regard with suspicion people with different political views, spiritual beliefs, or educational and economic backgrounds. For a deeper dive into bias, consider reading Jennifer Eberhardt's *Biased: Uncovering the Hidden Prejudice That Shapes What We See, Think, and Do*.

Knowing that we put people in boxes—draw lines around them based on our own beliefs about the differences we see—is a first step towards not putting them there. It's a step toward disarming our biases and living better among people who we initially think are different from us until we realize the differences are few compared to the many more things we share in common.

If you're interested in seeing a powerful demonstration of this, you might search the internet for a couple of videos. Use the words "YouTube" and either "all that we share" or "don't put people in boxes." You'll find two recordings, each worth their several-minute length, of an exercise that illustrates this point. One was produced by Danmark TV2 (Denmark's version of Public Television), the other by New Hope Church.

If you're not inclined to view the videos, here's a summary: Groups of people file into an auditorium and stand in boxes apart from other groups as a narrator describes the different ways we divide ourselves—by age, income, faith, etc. Then a moderator asks everyone to answer questions as honestly as they can, starting with the icebreaker: Who was the class clown? Other questions follow, including Who has felt lonely? Who has overcome adversity? Who has survived cancer? Who is madly in love? and much more. The once-separate groups reconfigure when people respond to each question and form new groups. Soon, there's really no telling who's with which group as each person reveals that they are much more than the identity of the first box they stood in. The "us" and "them" becomes "us."

It's easy to put people in boxes because it saves us the trouble of getting to know them well enough not to. Which isn't really that much trouble, considering the benefits of getting to know your fellow Applegaters.

Jim Reiland

jim@manyhandsbuilders.com

## ■ GRATITUDE

Continued from page 1

that our work is valued and that we are making a difference.

From my observations during a helicopter ride around the fire's perimeter, I noted distinct behaviors on the south and north sides. The south side, with its south-facing slopes and lighter fuels, experienced rapid fire spread and intense burning. Conversely, the north side, with more shaded, north-facing slopes and heavier tree stands, showed a varied burn pattern due to accumulated fuels, drought, and beetle kill. The mosaic of burned and unburned areas on the north side highlighted the complexity of the fire's behavior and the hazards faced

by our firefighters, necessitating safer indirect tactics.

While I never wish to see uncontrolled fires near our valley floor, I believe this fire may have long-term benefits. It burned through an area that had not seen fire in decades, reducing fuel loads without overly damaging the soil. In the coming years, we will assess the fire's impact on tree survival, but I am hopeful that this event has created a natural break in vegetation continuity, offering some relief for the future.

Looking ahead, I have been in discussions with the Oregon Department of Forestry management about hosting a "prescribed fire" roundtable or forum. This event will invite community

## ••• BIZBITS •••

**Farm and Flour.** Owner Melanie Scofield began selling a few loaves of bread at a table on her front lawn. Before long, customers doubled, then tripled, and, by January of this year, baking became a full-time business, her roadside stand stocked with delicious variations of fresh-baked breads, bagels, desserts, cookies, jams, and jellies. Melanie bakes everything with all-organic ingredients, including 600 cookies a week! To be notified about baking days or to preorder, sign up on Facebook at farmandflourville. Open Thursday-Monday • 17 Sterling Creek Road at Cady Road • Closed Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

•••

**Rogue Sauna.** For Daniel Kavanagh, Nate Plante, and John (Oak) Anderson, Rogue Sauna is the culmination of world travel, study, and lifetime experiences. These three owners, all in their mid-30s, plan to launch their sauna design and building company this fall. The partners will help buyers to experience the Finnish style of sauna in structures skillfully designed and built for each customer, using the finest sustainable materials to ensure durability and luxury. The company also provides DIY sauna kits and a community sauna. The owners of Rogue Sauna decided on southern Oregon as their home because of the area's focus on community, sustainability, and concern for the environment. Until they officially open for business, contact them at 541-291-7471 or roguesaunas@gmail.com.

•••

**Simpatico**—an adjective meaning likable, agreeable. For Chelsea Balmer, Simpatico is the name and description of her housecleaning business. Her mission is to create a vessel for inspiration by bringing order, cleanliness, and beauty into each house. No house is too big or too small—from a new tiny house to a 7,000-square-foot mansion. Chelsea and her team specialize in same-day turnover services for vacation home rentals. She also offers staging services for home sales, interior design, move-in/move-out services, and deep cleaning. Simpatico can assist in creating the vision of what you want your home to be! 503-858-5062 • support@simpaticoflow.com.

•••

**Wanderlust Vineyard**, including a wine-tasting room and guest cottage, is part of Jake and Jenny Benford's 12-acre farm in the Applegate Valley. With their recent grand opening, they hope every guest will appreciate the individual attention and the specially curated food-pairing with each wine they taste. Jake studied enology and viticulture at the University of California-Davis, so the couple is confident in their winemaking abilities. They are sourcing grapes until their vines mature and presently have six wines bottled for purchase and more ready for release in spring. Once established, they hope to practice dry farming to minimize water dependence. 1000 Kubli Road, Grants Pass • 12-5 pm Saturday and Sunday • Call 541-283-6097 for reservations • wanderlustvines.com.

Margaret Patterson • margaret@applegater.org

**BizBits** highlights businesses new to the area, holding special events, or offering new products. If you are a business owner, let us know when you move into the area or to a different location, hold a special event, expand your business, or mark a milestone. Email gater@applegater.org.

## We can help you reach your market!

The *Applegater* is the only newsmagazine covering the entire Applegate Valley. With a circulation of 13,500 and a readership of more than 20,000, the *Applegater* covers Jacksonville, Ruch, Applegate, Williams, Murphy, Wilderville, Wonder, Jerome Prairie, and areas of Medford and Grants Pass. For advertising information, contact:

## Jackson County

Alyssa Prophet @ 541-520-2219 or prophetsolutionsllc@gmail.com

## Josephine County

Max Unger @ 541-660-4031 or imaxunger@gmail.com

Next deadline: November 1



**Pegasus Sound Therapy**  
PEGGY LEVITON, MM, CERTIFIED  
Jacksonville, OR  
707-382-8641  
Individual Sessions • Acoustic Modalities



**Jeanne Schattler**  
(541) 621-2480  
Principal Broker, PSA, GRI  
Windermere Van Vleet Jacksonville  
505 N 5th St, Jacksonville, OR 97530  
jvillejeanne@gmail.com  
www.jeanne4land.com  
Specializing in Farms & Ranches / Eco-Friendly Lifestyle



CCB# 177466  
NV 42066  
CA 809835

**Paul Crean**  
541-415-1081

**ACTION ELECTRIC**  
Quality is doing the job right the first time.  
Commercial • Residential • Design Build  
paul.actionelectric@yahoo.com  
P.O. Box 537, Jacksonville, OR 97530



**Grants Pass Water Lab**

Eric Schaafsma  
Technical Director  
eric@gpwaterlab.com

541-476-0733  
Fax 541-476-8132


964 SE "M" Street  
Grants Pass, OR 97526

Accredited in accordance with NELAP  
ORELAP # OR100033  
ISO 17025:2005

**CECE SHOOP HOUSE KEEPING**

**CT Shoop Incorporated**

P.O. BOX 5557  
Central Point, OR 97502  
(541) 930-2437  
ctshoop15@gmail.com



**RISE UP!**  
ARTISAN BREAD

"Thanks for loving the bread, Applegate!"